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## Book Notices.

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### Abbot's Critical Essays.

*The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel and Other Essays*, selected from the published papers of the late Ezra Abbot. George H. Ellis. Boston, 1888. Price, \$3.00. Pp. 501.

America has never produced a biblical scholar of greater attainments and acumen than the late Dr. Ezra Abbot, Professor in Harvard University. His labors were of the most thorough and advanced character. His painstaking researches connected with important and difficult questions in the textual criticism, lexicography and exegesis of the New Testament place him in the very first rank of the world's specialists. His publications during his life-time were chiefly confined to learned review articles and pamphlets embodying the results of his exhaustive researches upon special topics. He was not a voluminous writer. A great part of his work was freely contributed to enrich the volumes of other men. He was a self-denying student who pursued learning for the love of it, stimulated chiefly by zeal for advancing sound and scientific knowledge.

A good work has been done in bringing together into a handsome volume a considerable number of his most valuable publications which were scattered about in reviews and pamphlets. The series is appropriately headed by his great essay on the external evidence of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel, the most exhaustive treatment of that subject in the English language. This extended essay was issued in a single volume in 1880 by the publisher of the "Critical Essays." In it the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel is defended with such an array of historic evidence and cogent argument as to leave little ground for the subjective and conjectural objections which have been so current in recent years.

One of the most elaborate essays in the volume is that on Romans ix. 5. In an exhaustive paper before the American Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, Dr. Dwight of Yale had defended the sense of this passage which is given in both our English versions: (R. V.) "And of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever." According to this reading Christ is called God (so still more plainly in the older version), and the passage is one of much doctrinal importance. Dr. Abbot in his essay defends the construction of the sentence which yields the sense of the marginal reading of the Revised Version. "Christ \*\*\* who is over all, God be (is) blessed forever." On this view the statement concerning Christ ends with the word "all" and there follows an ascription of praise to God. Hence Christ is not here called God. It is a question in which many fine points are involved, and for an example of fair, candid and acute controversy we commend our readers to these two essays. Dr. Dwight's paper was published in the *Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis* for 1881. It would be a happy circumstance if theological controversies and discussions in biblical science might always be conducted with something of the fairness and dignity which characterize this debate.

An essay of similar character discusses the expression in Titus ii. 13: "our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ," with a view to determining whether the words "God" and "Saviour" refer to one and the same person, namely Jesus Christ, or are coördinate terms and refer to different persons. Here, too, it will be seen that the construction which Dr. Abbott defends finds place in the marginal reading of the Revision.

These three papers to which we have made brief reference fairly represent the character of this volume. It is a book which no student of the New Testament criticism should be without. It represents the researches of one of the most learned men of the age; and while we can by no means concur with him in all his conclusions, we can always value his great learning and admire his conspicuous candor.

### A Contribution to the Science of Religion.

*Some Chapters on Judaism and the Science of Religion.* By Rabbi Louis Grossmann, D.D.; 12 mo, pp. 190. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1889. Price, \$1.50.

This book, if it does not stimulate thought, will be likely to be provocative of discussion. Its author is a Jewish rabbi, apparently of not very orthodox views. His aim is to show the contribution of Judaism as a religious belief and system of ideas to the science of religion in general. In this endeavor he is successful in developing the argument that the fundamental principles of Judaism are the most elevating and most universal of all religious conceptions. But his success is obtained at the cost of the sacrifice of all that has hitherto been regarded as essential to Judaism itself. The Judaism which he holds forth is so exceedingly modified as to be unrecognizable. Prophecy, as divinely derived or as prediction, is denied. The Bible is not inspired except as Spencer's "First Principles" may be said to be inspired. The spirit of reverence is reduced to "an attitude of respectful expectancy." The glory of Israel lies in her doctrine of providence and her zeal for conduct. It is in this emasculated system that our author finds the hope for humanity. Like all endeavors to form the universal religion out of the assumed wrecks of belief known as the partial or national religions among which Christianity is to figure, this composite photograph of faith is devoid of all strong and distinctive marks, a diluted natural religion, rationalistic in the extreme, broad to the limit of shallowness, benevolent to the verge of consideration for, and sympathy with, downright wickedness because forsooth it is sincere.

The truth is that the author, though brilliant, is not solid. He has not thought through his subject. His historical conclusions are not sound. His comparative estimate of Moses and Jesus, according to which he ranks Moses as a man of genius above Jesus who is a man of talent only, is a revelation of the quality of his critical insight. His abundant quotations from rabbinical literature, not the least valuable part of the book, are evidences of the weakness of his thesis. The world is not going back to Rabbinism such as is here revealed.

Some things are very sharply and clearly put by the writer, who now and then discloses a fine faculty for epigrammatic statement. Some examples may be cited. Religion "is the wisdom of history" (p. 61), "The antithesis to theological religion is personal religion" (p. 75), "The moralness (*sic*) of our deeds throws our dogmatics into the waste-basket" (p. 129), "Neither tradition nor theoretic religion has a right to brand a peaceable life as immoral, just because it was not turned out of their workshop" (p. 113). We are warranted in asking something more mature, more carefully thought out, from such a writer as this. If he had